



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

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News Release

Three Springfield men arrested in Tennessee license plate distribution scheme

SPRINGFIELD, MA—Three Springfield men were arrested yesterday on charges that they sold fraudulent Tennessee license plates in the Springfield area. Two of the men face other charges as well.

United States Attorney Michael J. Sullivan, Peter Zegarac, Inspector in Charge of the United States Postal Inspection Service and Matthew J. Etre, Acting Special Agent-in-Charge of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, announced today that Melvin Morales Berdugo, age 23, Victor Manuel Escalante, age 27, and Wilfredo Diaz-Gonzalez, age 28, were charged in an indictment with a mail fraud scheme involving the sale of Tennessee license plates to undocumented aliens living in the Springfield, Massachusetts, area. Berdugo and Diaz-Gonzalez also were charged with possession of document-making implements and Berdugo was charged with possession of a false Alien Registration Receipt Card, commonly known as a “green card.”

The indictment alleges that Berdugo, Escalante and Diaz-Gonzalez engaged in a mail fraud scheme, sending Postal Money Orders to an individual in Tennessee in return for Tennessee license plates obtained through false and fraudulent representations. The defendants distributed the license plates in the Springfield, Massachusetts, areas to individuals who could not register their cars in Massachusetts because they did not have Massachusetts driver’s licenses.

If convicted on these charges, the defendants face up to 20 years imprisonment, to be followed by three years of supervised release, and a \$250,000 fine.

The case was investigated by the U.S. Postal Inspection Service and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. It is being prosecuted by Karen L. Goodwin Assistant U.S. Attorney of Sullivan’s Springfield Branch Office.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of four integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.